Ravenstag Sightings

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/42587469.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Categories:	Gen, M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Original Graham-Lecter Child(ren), Will Graham's Dogs
Additional Tags:	Ravenstag, Magical Realism, Supernatural Beings, Bad omens, stress-relief sex
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-10-24 Completed: 2022-11-11 Words: 16,019 Chapters: 2/2

Ravenstag Sightings

by herding_elephants

Summary

Beor makes a new friend in the woods.
Will overreacts only *slightly* when he starts talking about a black deer with feathers but the being out of Will's own childhood starts to appear to them more and more and always before something unusual around them happens.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

There is something in the woods behind the house

When they decided to move in together Hannibal insisted on finding a house that suited both of them. Not his that was in the middle of the city, only streets around because Will enjoyed the nature and the woods and not Wolf Trap because Hannibal refused to be so far off - well everything, especially with Beor. Will still thought they could have made it work with the two houses they had but he started to hate the Baltimore house just like Hannibal anticipated and his house simply wasn't suitable to live in for more than one person and a couple dogs.

The house Hannibal eventually found was almost perfect. Still close enough to the city, to work, school and the opera for it to be feasible to live there and with enough grounds - and trees - that they didn't see their neighbors and the backyard backing towards the woods.

The only stumbling block had been Beor, who took one look at the house and refused to set a foot in there on account of it being scary and full of ghosts.

Although it wasn't haunted it was an older house and there was some work to be done. Hannibal thought about tearing it down and putting a new one there but Will refused and did what he could himself and organized the rest so it would be done to his satisfaction.

Beor still wasn't convinced when they moved in. He refused to take a step near the house and his daddy ended up carrying him inside to at least get out of the rain the day they moved in. Almost everything had already been brought in, even installed, or bought new as Hannibal decided to keep the other house for now and it was only their clothes and other personal belongings they still needed to bring in.

Beor clutched onto Hannibal all day, refusing to go farther than a foot away from him or Will and refusing to stay in any room by himself.

The two men rolled their eyes over it when he didn't look but didn't show it that they found his behavior ridiculous and instead tried to make him feel better. Hannibal cooked his favorite lunch and dinner, Will went exploring with him, hoping that the boy would see that it was just a normal house and in the evening they didn't even try to put him into his bed. Hannibal went to sleep with him and Will joined them not much later, the little boy cuddled against his father’s chest and sleeping quite calmly.

It took nearly a month for Beor to mostly be fine with the house. He refused to go near the cellar and the attic and there was an unused room, Hannibal had called a music room, he stubbornly insisted had to be locked from the outside. Given that they never went in there it was a small thing to do and they just locked it and put away the key.

If that was all to make him comfortable it was a small sacrifice.

Overall they enjoyed living together full time. Will usually left most of the parenting stuff to Hannibal while he slowly started to get eased into it and he loved Beor a great deal.

The dogs loved the new additions to their permanent family as well. When Will had spent a lot of time at Baltimore he always brought them, so they knew Hannibal and Beor quite well already and were very excited to being together at all times. They loved Beor especially. And Beor loved them. Every evening he begged for them to be allowed to sleep in his room which became so normal that the dog beds were in his room permanently now. Hannibal adamantly refused to allow any dogs on the beds and no matter how much Beor pouted about it he didn't budge. Not daring to oppose his daddy he never let the dogs on his bed but he did push the dog beds right in front of his own bed so he only needed to reach down during the night to pet one of them.

As they also helped in getting him to sleep in his own room both Will and Hannibal had been far more ready to allow it than usual.

With the dogs sleeping in Beors room Will usually woke him up when he fetched them in the morning and take them on a walk and more often than not Beor insisted to accompany Will. He usually haphazardly threw on some clothes and raced down to catch Will and more often than not Will had to insist for him to dress properly before taking him. But he didn't mind. It wasn't a terribly long walk in the morning and the little boy always kept up, he usually ran two times as much as Will did because in contrast to the house he was very brave in the woods. He always went left and right, looking at something, following the dogs to something and circling back to Will who kept an eye on him but let him explore.

Hannibal sometimes chided him for being dirty and always had breakfast ready for them when they returned. Beor then helped Will to feed the dogs and then ate his breakfast, telling his daddy about something he had seen on their walk or when he had dreamed something interesting.

He also liked to explore the woods in the afternoon. Hannibal and Will had discussed it at first, allowing him to run around in there alone and had decided that it was okay with some

rules. How far he was allowed to go in, although Will was pretty sure that it hadn't taken the boy long to disregard this rule and that he had to take the dogs. Which Beor was fine with. Depending on how long they were around Will even skipped the evening walk and he kind of enjoyed Beors stories of their adventures. He had a very vivid and active imagination and he always talked about animals he saw - most of them mythical and both Will and Hannibal always listened with a smile.

Alana had nearly lost her cool when Will at some point mentioned that Beor usually was alone around in the woods but Will just didn't understand her upset. The woods were safe first of all, even if he tried he really didn't get that far and he had the dogs with him, who without fail always could lead him home and protect him from anyone trying to harm him.

They also could - if they were really worried - track him through the little tracker that was tucked away in his jacket, always ensuring that they would be able to find him again if anything happened. He knew of it, Hannibal having explained to him what it was and why it was important that he never took it out of his jacket. They had never used it until now, Hannibal checked it from time to time to ensure it was still connected to their phones.

In the summer Beor begged Will for help to build a treehouse in the woods. After making sure it was okay with the owner of the woods they did. Will took two days of work and used the weekend as well, Beor helping eagerly with everything, Hannibal coming out to bring them snacks and help with some of the things that just needed to adults to do it. It was almost laughable how close it was to the house, Will could see the outdoor doghouse when he sat in there but Beor didn't care. He could spend hours in there. It wasn't even terribly high up, close enough to the ground that the dogs could get in with a ladder.

Will even got convinced to sleep out there with Beor a couple nights during the summer. it actually wasn't terrible. They made sure to make some comfortable beds and it was big enough for Will to comfortable stretch out. Beor cuddled against his chest, they drank hot chocolate out of the thermos they brought and Will even told the boy some stories before they fell asleep and were woken up far too early by a woodpecker who had picked their tree to try and make a hole into.

Will groaned and turned on his back, pulling the blanket a bit higher. The dogs perked up from him waking up while Beor was sleeping deeply, cuddled under his blanket. Will petted Winston who immediately came up to him and just listened to the woodpecker, to the birds singing, the dogs making noise all around him and enjoyed it. The woodpecker was persistent and woke Beor up as well who turned on his back and then sat up, yawning heavily and rubbing his eyes.

"I don't want ducks in my room," he told Will completely unprompted who looked at him more than confused.

As he didn't get an answer Beor looked down on him with a frown.

"No ducks, okay," Will answered quickly although he wasn't entirely sure what it was about.

They ate the rest of their supplies they had and took the dogs on a walk, returning to the tree house and packing everything and returned home.

Hannibal was just starting breakfast and sent them to shower and unpack.

Hannibal then got a much more eventful story of their night than it actually was and listened with a soft smile.

Will on his part took a nap in the afternoon because he got woken up just too early while Beor already was off again in the woods.

Will found Hannibal in the library reading and made himself comfortable on the older man's lap. Hannibal huffed as Will just dropped on him and then pulled him close, putting away the book he had been reading and picking up another one instead, starting to read to Will. Will leaned back against Hannibal's chest and closed his eyes, listening to Hannibal reading to him.

Only when Hannibal stopped Will opened his eyes and found that it had already started to get dark. He yawned as he sat up and checked the time. It was already more than an hour after their normal dinner time. Hannibal looked at the clock as well and checked again on the watch on his wrist.

"I didn't hear Beor come home," he said far calmer than he probably was. Will at least was immediately clutched by dread and fear.

"He probably is just out in the treehouse," he said, trying to calm himself down. Hannibal still seemed to be far less worried and nodded.

"Fetch him please yes? I'll make us a quick dinner."

They went downstairs and Will immediately made his way to the treehouse and was ready to collapse in relief when he found Beor sitting inside unharmed but full of dirt.

He turned around with a smile to Will and jumped out the treehouse in the man's arms. Will huffed when catching him and knew instantly that Beor wouldn't be the only one needing a bath after dinner.

"What were you up to?" Will asked him with a smile as the dogs followed out of the house.

"Just exploring," Beor told him.

"Where? A swamp?" Will asked and started their way back to the house.

"There are no swamps around here," Beor told him with a disapproving look and was all his father for a moment.

"Alright." Will just grinned. He put Beor down in front of the door and seeing the absolute mess he was made him undress down to his underwear and sent him to find his father while he went upstairs to soak the dirty clothes and put on a fresh shirt.

Beor naturally didn't have any problem in having dinner in only his underwear and Hannibal apparently had decided he wouldn't waste another change of clean clothes to put on before dinner.

Instead he listened to his son recounting his adventures of the day. Will grabbed the plates and just put them on the kitchen isle and fetched them something to drink as well, checked over the dogs that were eating, but Beor had done a good job and sat down by the little boy who just now came to the part that explained why he looked like a swamp monster.

It at least started harmless. He had gone down to the little stream, not really a stream anymore in the summer with the dogs and Will already guessed that he probably slipped in the mud somewhere. Or just played.

"There was a deer," Beor continued.

"And it didn't go away. When I went to it I slipped in the mud and it came up to me to check on me and let me pet it," He recounted and both men stared at him now. Will felt worried and upset at the same time and a look in Hannibal’s face showed him the man felt the same. There weren't a lot of things they had made a rule for Beor to go into the woods alone but to not get close to wild animals had been the biggest one.

The next second Will thought whether he could even believe a word Beor had said. He always liked to embellish his stories and with the pack of dogs on his heel there would be no animal stopping for even a second as soon as it noticed them.

"Didn't I tell you not to touch wild animals?" Hannibal asked, fixated on that and Beor looked at him slightly pouty.

"It came to me," he protested.

"Did it hurt you?" Hannibal asked and Beor shook his head.

"It just wanted pets like the dogs," he answered.

"What happened then?" Hannibal asked, not really believing the story either but deciding to get through it until the end.

"It started to walk away. I wanted to follow it but it started to run. But it lost a feather-" Beor looked around as if to present his evidence of his adventures and frowned when he realized that it probably still was outside in the treehouse.

Will had dropped his fork on his plate, splattering everything that had been on the fork over the kitchen isle which put all the attention solely at him. Will turned to Beor and bent down to look at him straight.

"How did the deer look like?" He asked.

Beor put his head to the side slightly.

"It looked like a deer," he said a bit petulantly not happy about his story getting derailed.

"What color was it?" Will asked.

"Black," Beor answered promptly.

"You said something about feathers-"

"It had feathers on its body and legs. It was really pretty. It had big antlers and feet and it was really soft-" Beor got back to his story happily while Will stared at him wide-eyed.

Hannibal had watched him pale over the last few minutes and redirected Beor to finish his dinner and allowed him to quickly run out to the treehouse to retrieve the feather. As soon as Beor was out of the door Hannibal walked to Will and put his hand on his shoulder.

"It seems like you're the one now who has seen a ghost," he mentioned with a smile and Will's head snapped around to him but he just nodded weakly. Hannibal grew more concerned with every passing second.

"Where is he?" He suddenly asked and looked around.

"He insisted on retrieving the feather," Hannibal told him and Will jumped up and ran outside, meeting Beor already in the garden, a black feather in his hands.

Will grabbed him and gave him a tight hug, quickly pulling him inside and locking all the doors.

Hannibal smiled at Beor who presented the feather to him and allowed him to put it into the living room, lifting him up so he could put it on a high shelf so the dogs couldn't get to it and then got him up and into the bathtub.

While playing in the hot water and trying to evade his daddy with the soap Beor continued to tell about the deer.

Hannibal listened with a smile but he had Will's reaction in the back of his head. Something was wrong and he would deal with it the second he had gotten Beor to sleep.

At least Beor was tired from his adventures all day and fell asleep within seconds, hugging his stuffie, the dogs already sleeping spread out in the room.

Hannibal as always had kept the door open so he could find his way outside without stepping on a dog and pulled it nearly fully closed. Beor didn't like it fully closed, a remainder from his conviction that ghosts were in here and Hannibal honored this request.

He found Will in the living room, draped into a chair, looking at the feather Beor had put onto the shelf not even an hour earlier.

"Would you like to talk about it?" Hannibal asked him, sitting down opposite him on the sofa.

"I am not sure what to say," Will answered, still looking at the feather.

"Do you believe what Beor told us?" he then asked.

Hannibal considered.

"I do believe that he saw a deer. I do not believe much else." He admitted.

"Maybe you should," Will answered him and Hannibal stayed silent, waiting for an explanation.

"When I was younger - young. I saw the same deer. It followed me for many years throughout my teen years and until I joined the FBI. Until I dealt with Garret Jacob Hobbs."

Hannibal continued to be silent.

"I have never told a soul about it," Will continued. "I haven't even told you. There is no way Beor could have heard about it, could know about it. I haven't even dreamed about it in years."

Will slowly but the feather down.

"I am afraid that it's actually real," he whispered, staring at the feather.

Hannibal got up and pulled Will out of his chair, back to the couch and pulled him into his arms.

"Would it be this awful if it were?" He asked softly and Will stayed still for a long time before he shook his head.

"Maybe it would not. But I haven't seen it in years. You know how it is about these things. People don't believe you. Most deny their sole existence violently. I am worried why it's coming back now."

"Maybe it isn't here to do harm," Hannibal suggested. "Maybe it is here to keep an eye on you. Or on Beor now."

"It never hurt me," Will agreed. "But it wasn't always good either."

"They seldom are," Hannibal answered.

"I'm just worried," Will admitted. "I never expected to see it again."

"Do you want to?" Hannibal asked and Will shrugged.

The feather stayed back when they went to bed, getting woken up by police sirens in the middle of the night.

Both shot up and pulled on some clothes and Will made his way downstairs to see what happened while Hannibal checked on Beor who was sleeping calmly.

Will slipped into his shoes and left the house, slowly walking down towards the street, seeing a police car drive by quite fast and he heard the tires squeal a second later when it braked.

He reached the end of their driveway and saw several police cars standing in front of a house down the street. Other neighbors had woken up as well, he saw windows get bright and some came out to look but Will didn't bother to stay longer. It probably didn't have anything to do with them and if it did, the police would surely ring their doorbell.

Back inside he made sure the doors were locked and came back upstairs. Beor by then had woken up and Hannibal had already taken him into their bed, the dogs had followed and were sleeping all around the bed.

Will got back in bed and turned towards Hannibal.

"Police's a couple houses down. Doesn't look that serious though," he said, although he had no idea what exactly happened. He just knew he didn't want to speculate in front of Beor.

Whether Hannibal believed him or not, he didn't show it and they laid down and Beor at least was back asleep within minutes.

Will woke up first as he did nearly every day and the dogs rose with him. Will put on some clothes, as quietly as possible because Hannibal and Beor were still deeply asleep and were quite grumpy when Will woke them up unintentionally.

Instead of going through the backyard his curiosity got the better of him and he went out the front door an down the street by the house that had been crowded by the police yesterday. There was no tape on the door and no obvious damage or anything.

Will shrugged and walked down to the end of the roads and then through the woods to their normal path.

When he returned Hannibal was making breakfast and Beor was playing in the living room and joined them for breakfast, trying to convince his daddy to get to go out in the woods, a conversation that clearly had been going on for longer than just now. Hannibal adamantly refused and Will had to smile over Beor's look. He seemed to seriously consider just how much ruckus he was willing to cause to win this argument.

And decided to spare himself that argument.

"I have to go to Wolf Trap today to pick something up. You can come with me if you want," he offered Beor and almost expected the boy to be stubborn but he nodded after a couple of seconds.

They left soon after, taking the dogs as well.

Beor had a ton of fun at the house, playing with the dogs, and while Will went to look for the box he had carefully hidden years ago somewhere Beor played with the dogs, inside and outside and more than once seemed to trip over half the furniture. Will called down to him to be careful but didn't get an answer and shrugged. If Beor would be actually hurt he would notice soon enough.

He found the box eventually and came downstairs, Beor perking up and the dogs did as well, all of them hoping that it would be something for them.

Will sat down on the couch and asked Beor to come to him, the boy quickly did and stopped in between Will's legs, leaning against his thigh.

Will handed him the box and Beor eagerly opened it, pulling away all the wrapping paper and pulling out a stuffed animal.

He looked at it in wonder, turning it over and then clutching it against his chest.

Will smiled and gave Beor a hug.

"I have seen your stag as well," he told Beor. "When I was your age and many times after that until I was an adult."

"Why did you make it into a stuffie?" Beor asked him, still pressing said stuffed animal against his chest.

"I don't know," Will answered. "Because I was scared of it when I was little."

Beor looked up to him.

"Can I keep it?" He asked and Will nodded and got a big hug from the little boy. They arrived back home right before dinner was ready and Beor raced into the kitchen to show Hannibal what he had gotten.

Hannibal complimented the stuffed animal but sent Will a pointed look when he entered and Will knew he would have some questions to answer when Beor was in bed.

The boy was very enarmored with his new toy and even insisted on having a place set for the stag at the dinner table. Hannibal indulged him as so often in these little things. It did stay at home for their quite short evening walk as the dogs had gotten all their energy out throughout the day in the field around Will's house.

Beor began asking Will about the stag and Will told him of some of his experiences with it, leaving the scary stuff out. He did made sure that Beor understood that he was never – under any circumstance – allowed to follow the stag. And that if he met it when he was alone he should turn back and look for one of them. Beor promised, all serious and Will assured him that it wouldn't hurt him but that he had to be careful with it.

The stag got an immediate special place in Beor's bed which delayed their whole bedtime ritual considerably because the boy insisted on completely reordering the whole army of stuffed animals in his bed several times until he was satisfied. For this evening at least.

Hannibal was not one to roll his eyes ever but Will saw him barely suppressing the urge when he finally emerged from Beor's room and sat down on the couch. Will handed him the glass of wine he had already poured and Hannibal accepted it with a smile and nipped on it.

"Are you going to ask?" Will asked.

“Not tonight,” Hannibal asked.

“It isn’t that deep,” Will muttered cuddling against his chest. Hannibal pulled him tight towards him. “I planned to give it to the dogs to rip apart to for some kind of satisfaction but it turned out being made so well that I couldn’t.”

Beor loved the stuffed animal more than any other. It was carried everywhere and while he never took it outside it had some unfortunate accidents during mealtimes and it caused a lot of tears having it cleaned. Eventually Beor decided that it was far too unsafe for his stag to ever leave his bed and Will and Hannibal were more than glad over this decision and encouraged it heavily because the well-being of this particular stuffie had given them sleepless nights over the last few months.

They didn’t hear anything about the real Ravenstag during this time although Beor still liked to spend as much time in the woods as he was allowed to and complained endlessly about it getting dark earlier and getting cold and wet and entirely not fun to be outside all day.

One afternoon near Christmas Will and Beor were on an afternoon walk with the dogs. Will was sick of getting home in the dark every day, walking the dogs in the dark and has decided that he was in need of some sunlight. Beor had decided to accompany him and Will couldn’t help but smile as they walked side by side, Beor rambling about the Christmas presents that had slowly started to appear since last week, one at a time. The snow crunched under their boots, it was cold but the sun shone down so hard that Will almost had to open his jacket and he couldn’t imagine a nicer afternoon.

Beor could barely restrain himself to not open the presents already. Will did find it an unnecessary test of his willpower to put presents under the tree before Christmas but Hannibal insisted that it had to be done this way. There was one specifically, wrapped in silver paper with Beor’s name on it, the boy sneaked around for days now. He seemed to know exactly what was in there and Will actually had considered storing it away to keep it safe until Christmas.

He was ripped out of his thoughts when Beor suddenly tugged on his jacket, his go-to move when Will didn’t pay attention to him.

He stopped dead in his tracks and looked down on Beor, who was still holding onto his jacket and pointed at something opposite them.

In a clearing not even thirty feet from them the Ravenstag stood and stared back at them.

Will pulled Beor close to his side and whistled for the dogs. The Ravenstag didn't move at first but then stepped closer a bit and Beor tried to get out of Will’s grip but Will didn't allow him to step away from him.

It stopped again and stared and Will felt the urge to run away, to get as much distance between them and the stag as humanely possible but found himself frozen solid in place, Beor having quickly changes his mind about getting closer to the stag and vanishing behind his legs.

Eventually it made a move with it’s head back towards their house and Will understood immediately. He nodded, looked around for the dogs that sat around him and turned around. He took Beor’s hand and they made their way back a lot quicker than they had gone.

Beor stumbled several times, looking over his shoulder back to the stag and Will eventually lifted him up, huffing slightly as he was getting too big to be carried, by Will at least and made the rest of their way home. Beor had immediately slung his arms and legs around him and looked back, snuggling close against Will. He seemed quite unsure and as soon as Will had put him down in the house and he had kicked off his shoes he had ran off upstairs.

Will followed, having a hunch where he would find the boy and entered Hannibal’s study. Beor was curled together on his daddy’s lap, Hannibal hugging him tightly and sending Will a concerned look as soon as he entered.

Will came to him, bending down and pressing a short kiss on his lips.

"We saw the Ravenstag again," he shared quietly as if he feared he could summon it in this room.

Hannibal reflexively pulled Beor closer against his chest.

"Did it do anything?"

"It told us to go back home," Will answered.

Beor was quite spooked the rest of the evening, trailing after Will and Hannibal all night.

Will actually didn't mind much and sat down at the kitchen isle with Beor while Hannibal cooked and played a game with him.

They didn't even try putting him into his own bed and Will went to bed soon as well.

He woke up in the middle of the night and sat up, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. The room was lighted from the clear sky and the full moon shining in. Will still preferred not to draw the curtains.

Hannibal and Beor were sleeping calmly by his side and Will wanted to lay down and fall asleep again when he heard heavy breathing at the other end of the room.

The Ravenstag seemed to step right out of the wall, slowly dislodging itself from the shadows there and stepping closer towards the bed. Will felt the urge to run away, he didn't want to look away from the stag coming closer but had to assure himself that Beor and Hannibal were still fine.

They still slept completely calmly and undisturbed and the second it took Will to check, the Ravenstag had made its way to the bed and now looked down on him, slowly lowering its head.

Will wasn't sure whether it wanted to be touched and slowly lifted up his hand. It was warm, soft even and Will felt its breath on his bare arm.

The Ravenstag nudged him then, as if it was trying to get him out of bed and Will slowly climbed out and turned to it. It once again only moved its head towards the door and Will hesitantly walked across the room.

Right as he extended his hand towards the door Beor suddenly woke up with a little gasp and was quite uncoordinated in trying to get out under the covers that had been tucked tightly around him. Will stopped, staring at the stag that was so much closer to Beor than him and thought whether he could reach him before the Ravenstag did.

Beor clutched his miniature Ravenstag against his chest and looked at Will first and then heard the Ravenstag as well, looking at it.

He however was not afraid. Instead he immediately made his way towards it, standing in the bed, his stuffie still clutched to his chest and the Ravenstag moved towards him and allowed him to hug it.

"Beor," Will's voice was weak and far away and the boy didn't even look up, instead he started to pet the stag who stood still for quite a while before slowly stepping back. Beor let it go immediately and didn't move to follow it as it made its way back through the room and disappeared in the shadows.

Will ignored what the Ravenstag probably had wanted to show him and went back to the bed where Beor had sat back down and yawned heavily.

Will sat down on the edge of the bed, wanting to say something to the boy when he stared into a white face with black eyes.

He jumped back, stumbled over something and crashed down on the floor, hitting his wrist on the bedframe.

He felt his heart race as he sat up in his bed, feeling his T-Shirt wet and cold against his skin and looked around the room. It was the same, the moon gave him some light to see the room but there was no stag and when he turned to take a look at Beor he looked like he always did.

Will tried to get his racing heart and his breathing back under control and collect his thoughts.

"It was just a dream," he whispered to himself and checked the watch. It was three in the morning. He was in his bedroom and Beor was okay. He was okay.

Will slowly got up and went into the walk-in closet, grabbing himself some fresh clothes and then went into the bathroom to at least dry off and change clothes.

He washed his face and dried himself off after discarding his wet clothes. It had been many years since he had woken up drenched in sweat and he hadn't missed it one bit.

Stepping back into the bedroom he remembered the stag wanting him to do something. He figured that the stag probably had wanted him away from Beor but it probably wouldn't hurt to check the downstairs and the dogs.

They were sleeping in Beor's room regardless of him sleeping in there and didn't move when Will poked his head into the room and downstairs everything was normal as well. Doors were locked and everything was where it was supposed to and Will returned upstairs. He threw his blankets on the floor as they were wet as well and grabbed an extra blanket out of their wardrobe, throwing down a towel on the mattress.

Right as he laid down and pulled the blanket over him, Beor woke up. He turned towards Will and yawned, immediately after coming to Will and cuddling against his chest, his Ravenstag pressed between them.

Will was glad for that in this moment. He pulled Beor close to him and pulled his blanket over both of them falling asleep quickly.

They got woken up by Hannibal, pulling both of them to him, pressing a kiss on Will's cheek as he slowly started to blink.

"Did you have a bad night?" Hannibal immediately asked and Will wondered just how tired he looked to warrant this question.

"Nightmare," he admitted. Hannibal pulled him a bit closer, nearly crushing Beor in between them who didn't really mind.

He did eventually start to squirm and they gave him free but had a slow morning, cuddling a while longer and slowly making their way downstairs. Where they found one of the trees in their backyard broken in half, branches spread everywhere, the top of the tree laying in the middle of their yard. Will had seen it first and had stopped in the entryway of the kitchen, both Beor and Hannibal impatiently pressing behind him to get into the kitchen. Hannibal stopped right by Will’s side, his arm wrapping around Will and pulling him close, catching Beor by the back of his shirt and pulling him back to his side.

“Did you hear anything?” Will asked slowly, staring at the destroyed tree. It almost looked like lightening struck it, but it wasn’t burnt and Will knew one thing. They would have noticed a lightening strike this close to their house. It hadn’t even rained during the night. They should have heard half a tree crashing down in the middle of their backyard.

The house seemed to be undamaged at least and Hannibal called someone to come clean the chaos up and get rid of the wood. Will figured they probably could use some of the food for their fireplace but Hannibal insisted on not having even a piece of it brought into the house.

They got rid of it quickly, and learning or at least guessing what had happened, promised to dispose of it properly. Hannibal had made them breakfast and coffee, had made the workers coffee and other hot drinks, inviting them inside a couple times to at least warm up and eat lunch with them, Will had walked the dogs and had taken Beor with him, but they hadn’t gone into the woods and then made sure that Beor was occupied and didn’t go outside while they were cleaning up.

Beor begged to get to go outside and in the woods in the afternoon and Will agreed to accompany him, not ready to leave the boy out of his side and Hannibal was still busy with getting their yard cleaned up.

They weren't even past Beor's treehouse when he started to ask questions about the Ravenstag. About when Will had seen it and why they were so worried about it. And why there were always things happening after they had seen it.

Will decided to tell the truth as best as he could.

"It's dangerous," he started. "These – well creatures have always existed alongside us but rarely ever seek out contact. Some people say it's a bad omen when you see one of them, others say the opposite. I'm not really sure what is true, both probably but I'm worried about it appearing here with us."

"I think it's nice," Beor told him. "But it's a little bit scary." He admitted.

"I agree. I don't want you to meet it again when you are alone," Will then said.

"Does daddy see it as well?" Beor asked him and Will shrugged.

"I don't know. Maybe. He hasn't been around it yet." He answered slowly.

Beor seemed to think about what Will told him for quite a while.

"Does everybody see it?" He asked next.

"I don't know," Will had to admit. "We don't know much about them except that they exist. The people seeing them usually don't talk about it. They were afraid of being called crazy for a long time. Others were afraid people would start to hunt and kill them."

Beor was quiet as well but slipped his hand into Will's who pressed it hopefully reassuringly.

"Do you think it damaged the tree?" He finally asked, looking up with worry in his eyes.

"I don't, I hope it just tries to protect us, to warn us," Will decided to lie a little bit. He really did hope that but he also knew that probably the boy had been spot on with it being at least partly responsible for the chaos.

They turned around eventually and made their way back, Beor dragging his feet a bit. He wanted to stay in the woods a bit longer but Will was cold and wouldn't leave the boy alone out here. And the dogs already ran ahead back home.

Both of them quickened their steps when they heard the dogs bark and stopped dead in their tracks when they found the Ravenstag standing in front of the gate leading into their now empty backyard.

It looked bigger than the last time they had seen it and was quite agitated.

The dogs had stopped at the last line of trees and were barking but didn't go any closer towards the Ravenstag. Will unsuccessfully tried to calm them down while he also didn't take his eyes of the Ravenstag. Beor didn't seem that intent to go near it this time around and they stood opposite each other for several minutes. The stag was stomping its feet and shaking its head around but didn't move from where it stood.

Beor pressed himself against Will's side and Will put his arm around him, pulling him even closer, even pulling him a bit behind himself.

The Ravenstag was staring at them now and took one step towards them which caused the dogs to go crazy again.

Hannibal appeared in the door a second later but stopped there and the Ravenstag moved its head towards the house once and then left, quickly picking up speed as it ran away and disappeared in the woods. They stared after it until Hannibal was right by them and pulled them into a hug. The dogs were sniffing around where the stag stood while Will leaned against Hannibal, trying to stop himself from shaking.

"We have to go," he finally said and felt Hannibal's grip tighten around him.

He swallowed. "Just for tonight. It's trying to warn us Hannibal and we need to listen."

Hannibal didn't consider long and nodded. They went inside and quickly packed some clothes and other necessities. Beor was apprehensive to the idea and didn't do anything but sit on his favorite chair and hugging his stuffed Ravenstag while he watched them pack some stuff. Will called an old friend of his, one that lived in the same city and had a lot more experience with these things and he promised to come by.

Randall listened to what happened and immediately agreed with them over leaving the house. For a while at least and promised to stay here and keep an eye on anything going bad. Will thanked him and they put their things in the car, got the dogs settled and then drove off.

They drove for several hours, until long after dinner time to a house on the coast at the sea that belonged to Hannibal as well. They could have gone to a closer one, even to Wolf Trap for just a couple of days but they both wanted to get more distance between themselves and the Ravenstag and more importantly between Beor and whatever would happen at their house.

Beor was long asleep by then, still holding his stuffed Ravenstag tightly against his chest, tucked under a blanket. Hannibal carried the boy inside and into his room in that house, changing him into his pajamas and tucking him in tightly, allowing the dogs in the room and even on the bed while Will got their stuff inside and made sure all the doors were locked.

He and Hannibal sat down in the living room and opened the big patio doors to hear the sea crashing against the high cliffs the house stood on, cuddled under a blanket and against each other and staring into the night. Waiting for something to happen. A call over their house burning down. The Ravenstag appearing here. Other things than the Ravenstag appearing here.

Suddenly Will jerked his head up to look at Hannibal.

"We forgot the Christmas presents," he said and saw Hannibal's face almost glitch for a second before he pressed a kiss on his temple. "We'll be back home until Christmas," Hannibal promised and Will wanted to believe it.

new and old friends

It got freezing quickly even though they were tightly cuddled together under the blanket and Hannibal got up to close the doors and instead of sitting back down he pulled Will up, pulling him close to his chest, the blanket still draped around Will spending warmth in the freezing room. They had better ideas than opening the doors in the middle of winter, Will thought as he wrapped his arms around Hannibal and rested his head against his shoulder.

Hannibal pulled him closer to his chest, sharing his body warmth with him, smug as he always was.
“We should go to bed,” Hannibal finally pulled away and Will nodded but kept the blanket around him. Hannibal wrapped his arm around him and kept him close as they made their way to their bedroom, stopping at an open door and looking in.

Beor was sleeping calmly, just like Hannibal had tucked him in, the antlers of his stuffed Ravenstag sticking out by his head.

The dogs were sleeping around the bed on the dog beds that stayed at this house but with the blankets they had brought from home for them to sleep well. Hannibal was still going strong on the ‘no dogs on the bed’ rule but Will was sure he and Beor would crack him soon enough at least regarding Beor’s bed but they both were biding their time.
“The safest boy on earth,” Will said knowing how cheesy it sounded and Hannibal pulled him close and pressed a kiss on his cheek.

“I would hope so,” he answered softly.
Moonlight shone into the massive windows, curtains and blinds opened just like Beor liked it. As soon as there was a sliver of the moon no curtains or blinds were allowed in front of the window. The room was brightened beautifully by the near full moon that hung on the sky. In the summer, especially when they were away from the city, Beor was even allowed to keep the windows wide open.

Hannibal loved to tease his young son for it, calling him a werewolf. Teasing him for the dog hair constantly sticking to his clothes since Will and his dogs moved in with them, asking him if he was shedding his fur even outside the full moon.
Beor already giggled at this point vehemently denying that he was a werewolf while Hannibal put out the most ridiculous theories to prove that he indeed was one. Will could play the whole conversation in his head by now but still enjoyed watching it every single time.

At some point Hannibal would finally ask his son to prove that he wasn’t one and Beor would earnestly tell him all the things werewolves could do and he couldn’t. Hannibal would refute every proof, not believing a word Beor said until the boy finally presented his ultimate proof.

He told his daddy that everybody knew that - just like with dogs - chocolate was poisonous to werewolves, even more so than dogs and that even a piece would instantly kill every werewolf. No matter how strong the werewolf was. Hannibal then hemmed and hawed but

eventually told Beor that he would need to prove it at which point Beor couldn't hide his smile. Either there was already some chocolate tucked away in Hannibal's desk or in his pocket or they made their way into the kitchen.

Hannibal broke off a piece under the watchful eye of Beor who immediately demanded a bigger one. Hannibal would hold against this demand that Beor himself had said even the smallest piece of chocolate would kill a werewolf and Beor would still insist that bigger was better.

Sometimes he convinced his daddy but even when he didn't he relished the treat and triumphantly waited for his daddy to be convinced then. Hannibal hugged him and kissed him then and promised that he was convinced.
"What are you thinking about?" Hannibal interrupted his thoughts and Will smiled.

"Werewolves," he answered and felt Hannibal chuckled by his side. It wasn't just Beor who loved this little game they had together. And Will had to admit that Beor really was full of dog hair near constantly. But as his favorite spot was in between all the dogs it was unavoidable and they tried to look at least presentable when they went out of the house.
"Let's go," Hannibal finally pulled both of them away, trusting Beor to be safe here and protected by the dogs.
Their room was a lot warmer and Will put the blanket he brought on the bed and opened their suitcase, grabbing his pajamas out of it, far too lazy to actually unpack everything. He also grabbed his toiletries bag and went into the bathroom, Hannibal following closely behind. Already while brushing teeth Hannibal brushed his hand against Will's back, settling on it.

A soft touch, asking more than anything. Offering everything from comfort to stress relief. Will leaned into the touch before he bent down to spit the toothpaste out and Hannibal's hand lingered until he needed both of his to wash his face. Will was finished first and changed before walking back into their room.

He crossed the room and stopped in front of the large doors, opening the curtains and the blinds to allow the moonlight to enter their room as well. He thought about opening the doors to hear the waves crash against the cliff under them but he didn't want to get the room cold right before going to sleep.

He felt Hannibal's eyes burn into his back, waiting for what he wanted - and wanting him in their bed by his side regardless of the choice but Will continued to stare outside into the night so beautifully brightened by the moon.
He seemed to have stood there too long because he felt Hannibal step up to the windows behind him and leaned back against him, Hannibal wrapping his arms around him immediately.

"If it wouldn't be the middle of winter I might suggest some activities outside," Hannibal muttered into Will's ear who actually considered for a second. If they would be quick - but the cold probably wouldn't allow anything to happen quickly.

"It would be nice in the moonlight," he agreed and Hannibal preened behind him in satisfaction of this particular memory. They always enjoyed the days - and nights - when Beor slept over at a friend's and they had more time to plan and do.

Hannibal was kissing him, while he pushed his hands up under Will's T-Shirt. Will dipped his head back to rest on Hannibal's shoulder and relaxed into his arms even more. Hannibal pulled them over to the bed now, not ready to wait any longer.

He laid down first and Will climbed on top of him, moving much more than necessary just to see Hannibal writhe under him as an answer. He bent down to kiss him but stopped Hannibal's attempt to prolong the kissing as he reached over to the nightstand to find the lube.

When he found the lube he abandoned his position on top of Hannibal and instead settled between his legs and pulled the pants off him, discarding them on the floor by the bed and discarding his own pjs as well.

Hannibal readily spread his legs for him and took the other pillow, putting it under himself to give Will the best possible access. Seeing Hannibal already getting hard now filled Will with cat-like satisfaction and he slipped down a bit further on the bed to be able to kiss - and lick - Hannibal's cock, getting him fully hard, laying upwards against his belly and Hannibal desperately grabbing for him and trying to keep him where he was.

Will flicked open the bottle and turned it over. As nothing got out he gave it a good squeeze and cursed when half the bottle emptied itself in his hand at once. It was cold in his hand, starting to run off his fingers and down his forearm. In a futile try to keep the mess of the bed he held his hand over Hannibal's mid who hissed as the first drop of cold lube hit him. Will scooted up a bit again and allowed Hannibal to pull him into a kiss while he still tried to keep the mess of the bed and get the lube where it belonged. It was still cold when he brought his hand down between Hannibal's legs and generously put the lube everywhere, not that he could prevent it even if he tried. In fact everything got too slick quickly because being distracted with kissing he slid between Hannibal's cheeks several times until he found the entrance and felt like a fumbling teenager.

Finally he got the first finger in, getting rewarded by a moan from Hannibal and started working his finger in and out, adding a second one as soon as he felt everything was lubed up enough. Hannibal was already moaning softly.
He worked himself up to four and then finally pulled out his fingers and scooted up a bit more, touching himself to get some lube on his own dick and then lined himself up, Hannibal writhing in front of him in need and lust. Will could never get sick of that view. The most beautiful one he could have ever imagined. Hannibal reduced to just himself, showing his every feeling and desire without a second thought.

Will took his time pushing in with a low grunt and quickly pressed his hand on Hannibal's mouth as his resulting moan increased in volume.

He kept his hand on Hannibal's mouth when he started to move, trying to get him to keep the noise down as much as possible. Hannibal was loud - passionate he himself would correct - and Will really wanted to keep him from being too loud. Especially in a house with less than ideal soundproofing.

Keeping one hand on Hannibal's mouth, he wrapped the other around his cock while he started to move, Hannibal pressing his heels in the mattress to lift his hips off the mattress

slightly, always moving towards Will, his own hand wrapping around Will's, intertwining their fingers.

Will kept his rhythm, moving his hand in the same rhythm and worked both of them towards climax steadily.
He always tipped over the edge first, now moaning himself and stilling after his last few frantic movements but still moving his hand, doing everything he knew tipped Hannibal over the edge. Will's other hand had slipped off Hannibal's mouth as he braced himself against the bed and their moans intermingled as Hannibal followed suit, his back arching off the mattress while his cum coated both their hands and his chest.

Will pulled himself out and let himself sink against Hannibal's chest, strong arms keeping him there neither of them caring for the mess.

"We need to clean up," Hannibal eventually said and sat up, pulling Will up with him and out of bed. They took a quick shower, hands lingering on each other, staying under the hot water together and then quickly drying off. Hannibal grabbed his pants, Will had discarded and Will pulled off the blanket they had dirtied and dumped it on the floor.
They cuddled together in the bed under their covers, Will bedded his head on Hannibal's naked shoulder getting hugged tightly and falling asleep like that.

Beor unsurprisingly didn't care how little sleep they got when he woke them up the next day. He knocked and Hannibal called him in, still half asleep. Beor opened the door and came in, holding his stuffed Ravenstag and walking straight to his daddy, climbing up on the bed. Hannibal yawned and pulled him close and Beor cuddled against him and seemed happy to doze a bit longer. It seemed like it was still the middle of the night either way as dark as it was in the room.
They got another half hour before Beor finally had enough and got both of them up in record time, happily staying cuddled in bed while they trudged into the bathroom to change and get awake.
Will got the dogs and fed them, sitting down by Beor's side then.

Hannibal in the meantime started making pancakes and pulled out a fresh glass of Nutella and cut some bananas. One of Beor's - and Will's - favorite toppings for pancakes and something Hannibal made always sure to bring when they were away from home.

"Thank you," Beor told his daddy with a smile as he got served the first plate and a mug of hot chocolate and tucked in immediately. Will got the second plate and Hannibal put his own on the kitchen isle and then poured himself and Will some coffee before he sat down as well to eat.

All three of them had a second helping as well and while they still ate they watched the already clouded sky getting darker and darker. So dark that Will considered turning on some light.

He quickly finished his coffee and called the dogs to take them out before he would get into that storm. He decided to leave Beor at home and just let the dogs run out in front of him, hoping to get some of their energy out and not have them shit in the front garden.

The clouds pressed down on him and Will felt the pressure in his body as if it just waited to get released. When he saw the even darker front coming closer he called the dogs back and they just made it home before it started to pour. Thick heavy drops mixed with heavy and wet snow, each drop weighing a ton from how they hit the windows.

Hannibal seemed to be in quite the permissive mood because Beor was watching TV while Hannibal sat at the desk in the living room and seemed to draw something. Will let himself fall on the couch which got him a giggle from Beor and pulled the boy close to him, the dogs made themselves comfortable all around the living room and on the couch.

The show Beor was watching was grating but he thankfully let himself be persuaded to change the channel after the episode ended and Will settled on some documentary. The rain poured down so hard outside that you could hear it everywhere. Will checked on the dogs from time to time but they still slept calmly and turned down the volume to just listen to the rain, something all three of them loved doing.

Beor was cuddled into his side and just listened to it, not even paying attention to the TV anymore and Will turned it off after a while. He could do with a nap despite sleeping so long and found himself dozing off soon, Beor abandoning his spot and settling on the carpet to play.

Will startled awake when a thunder rolled over them, seemingly right above their house and found Hannibal sitting in his preferred chair and Beor playing but both stopping to listen to the thunder. It was loud, so loud that the dogs were jolting as well and Will sat up and called them to him while Hannibal got up and checked that all the windows were closed.
He didn't return for a while and when he came back he suggested that they would put the dogs into one of the guestrooms that was sound-proofed better so they would not be scared. It wasn't a great room, the only one without any windows to the outside and weirdly awkward in the middle of the house but it was a nearly completely silent in there, even with the thunder and it held a big bed and enough floor space for the dog beds Beor dragged from his room into the guest room.

Will stayed with the dogs while Hannibal went to check on Beor who sat right at the big doors outside and watched the heavy rain come down, seeing the lightning and hearing the thunder clash right over their heads. Hannibal lifted him up and sat down, Beor cuddling on his lap and staring outside.

The weather seemed to get even worse. It was only shortly after lunch but it was almost completely nice, the lightning burning itself into their vision. Thunder was rolling over into each other, the lightning strikes were everywhere and eventually Beor seemed to get quite uneasy, clutching into his daddy's jacket and hiding away his face.

Hannibal got up, holding Beor tightly and they went into the guest room as well where Will sat in a chair and was reading a book, the dogs sleeping quite calmly all over the floor.

Beor held tightly onto his daddy. He loved rain and thunder but this was too much. Will put down his book and Hannibal put Beor down into his lap and left the room again, coming back with some of Beor's toys and a couple of books plus his phone he had left in the living room and closed the door tightly.

Will tightly hugged the little boy who admitted how scary the thunder was and made sure he was okay and promised that nothing would happen to them although he wasn't so sure about that himself. The thought about this storm not being completely natural creeped up in his head, especially seeing Beor this scared because of it.

In the room they heard little of the storm outside, although the worry stayed with Hannibal and Will who exchanged glances over Beor's head.

The rest of the day was slow, reading, keeping Beor occupied mostly and Hannibal made them a snack in the early afternoon and some dinner in the evening he brought into the room as the storm was still going. Will fetched their pajamas and toothbrushes then as well as Beor's Ravenstag stuffie and they quickly brushed their teeth and laid down in the bed, Beor cuddled under a thick blanket on one side of the bed, Hannibal and Will on the other, pulling each other close, listening to each other's breathing, to the dogs and to the storm and thunder they heard as if it was far away.
"Have you thought about this storm not being natural?" Hannibal whispered, his lips practically on Will's ear and Will slightly nodded. He was quite sure of it now that something was wrong about it.

"What if it's coming here?" Hannibal asked then, and Will knew he would never ask if it wasn't for Beor. For them he would be sure that they could themselves but when it came to his son he was so much more worried.
"I don't know," Will admitted.

They barely got any sleep, Hannnibal dozed for a couple hours because Will insisted and startled awake in the middle of the night unsure about what had gotten into him and then Will got a couple hours of sleep at last.

When he woke up he found Beor cuddled in between him and Hannibal and Hannibal watching him with half-open eyes, a small smile cutting through the deep worry in his face.

Will marveled over it, it was still something so special for him to see Hannibal drop his person suit around him, be fully himself whether he felt good or bad.

The storm had passed when they finally got up and into the kitchen but the clouds pressed down on them, black and gray, threatening more rain and more storms. After a very quick breakfast they put on some clothes and went outside. They needed some fresh air, even air that was so loaded up and even tasted dangerous. The dogs ran ahead outside but Beor stayed glued to their side and neither of them minded.

After a short walk across the field to not have the dogs shit in front of their door they returned and grabbed some shovels to get rid of the sludge in front of the garage in case they needed to get away from here as well while Beor threw a stick for the dogs to tire them out and keep himself occupied.

Hannibal and Beor then went inside, making sure to get the dogs clean and dry before letting them loose inside the house while Will stayed outside a bit longer and called Randall who reported that nothing happened and mentioned the storm to him. Randall asked him if they

had seen anything. Will answered truthfully, although he doubted that he would see half the signs Randall knew and was told to keep his eyes open.

He promised he would. They kept the doors open for a couple minutes to get some fresh air in and sat together, trying to distract themselves. Beor read a book that had interested him in the bookshelf, Hannibal helping out when he got stuck at some harder passages and Will having the urge to do something with his hands, had pulled out the fly tying set he kept here and started to make some new ones.

Beor suddenly put his book down, climbed off the couch and already had opened the doors before Hannibal had gotten up to follow him.

“Will!” Hannibal’s voice startled Will out of his concentration and he quickly got up to join Hannibal and Beor standing in the door.

The Ravenstag stood opposite the house, still quite some distance away but there was no mistaking it. It slowly started to walk towards them with quite the noticeable limp and as it came closer it looked disheveled, its feathers bent in every direction and it was wet and shivering. It looked smaller than the last time they had seen it.

“It’s hurt,” Beor piped up with the same observation the two men had and moved to get closer to the Ravenstag but Hannibal immediately grabbed him and kept him close.

“Daddy, it’s hurt! We have to help!” Beor told him, trying to get out of his daddy’s grip but Hannibal refused to let him go.

Will swallowed heavily, still looking at the Ravenstag that steadily came closer.

“Maybe Beor’s right,” he said, feeling Hannibal’s sharp look burning into his skin.

“What do you propose?” He asked, still keeping Beor from going towards the stag.

“Maybe we should invite it inside,” Will couldn’t believe that he actually said that and the second sharp look he got from Hannibal proved how batshit insane he sounded.

Will nodded, trying to look more sure than he was and Hannibal seemed to accept that and they moved away from the door.

The dogs didn’t bark this time as the stag slowly came nearer and seemed to shrink even more.
It was still larger than a normal stag as it carefully stepped up to the large doors and lowered it’s head, twisting it slightly to get its antlers through without damaging anything.

Will had pushed the coffee table and the couch against the wall to make as much room as possible and had stepped back as well, in front of Hannibal, who had lifted Beor up and kept him on his hip.

It laid down on the carpet in the middle of the room, its hurt leg oddly stretched out and letting its head sink down.

The dogs came closer carefully and sniffed around the stag but then returned to their beds in the corner and didn't bother it anymore.

Will crossed the room carefully to close the doors and then sat down, Hannibal followed him and sat down by his side, putting Beor on his lap, who as soon as Hannibal's grip around him loosened, squirmed out of it and raced over to the Ravenstag, cuddling against its neck.

"Beor-" Hannibal tried to keep his son away but was already too late and he didn't bother finishing the sentence.
Within five minutes it had bedded its head on his lap and he was petting it carefully, one hand resting on its neck and one petting its snout. Hannibal and Will couldn't say they were comfortable with it but the Ravenstag clearly wasn't dangerous right now.

Will eventually joined Beor on the floor, sitting down by his side, petting the stag as well. It was soft, much more than he imagined. He even sorted the feathers a little bit, hoping that he wasn't hurting it.

It breathed heavily, a wheezing sound coming out of it every couple of breaths and Will felt deeply worried for it.
"Your medical training didn't include animals per chance?" Will asked Hannibal, not looking away from the stag.
"It didn't even include non-supernatural animals," Hannibal answered but came nearer and sat down on the floor as well. Beor looked at him upset.

"You have to help it daddy," he said.

"I'm not sure I can," Hannibal muttered and Beor wasn't ready to even consider the possibility that Hannibal would not be able to do anything.

"You have to daddy," he told him again and Hannibal just petted the Ravenstag as well and didn't answer.

"We could see if it needs something to drink and eat," Will suggested, to at least do something.

Beor immediately nodded.

He and Will went into the kitchen but the dogs' bowls seemed too small even for water and it ended up being one of Hannibal's big pots they filled with water. Will carried the water in the living room and the stag slowly got up a bit and finished nearly the whole pot and Will brought more.

Hannibal left for the kitchen then, looking for something he could offer the stag. He wasn't even sure whether the Ravenstag was a herbivore and decided to offer it some meat as well.

He returned with a tray full of different things, vegetables and meat and hoped that there was something the Ravenstag would like and be able to eat.

The stag sniffed as he put the tray down and moved to nibble on a carrot, Beor jumping from where he sat to hold it and help the Ravenstag. It finished everything, the vegetables as well as the meat and put its head down again, closing its eyes.

Beor stayed closed by its side while it started to breathe slower and calmer. Hannibal prepared some lunch for them, leaving the Ravenstag alone in the living room for the duration of their meal. Beor could barely sit still and ate as quickly as he could, not even slowing down when Hannibal reprimanded him several times and running back into the living room as soon as he put the last bite into his mouth.

Will caught Hannibal's look and laughed causing Hannibal to chuckle as well.

"We might need to build a bigger outdoor dog house if we're gonna keep it," he mentioned just to see Hannibal still in horror over the possibility.

They spent the rest of the day in the living room with the Ravenstag. Beor read to it, didn't even ask to turn on the TV and kept its head on his lap at all times. Hannibal and Will didn't leave him alone with the Ravenstag but didn't try to get him away from the stag. It would be a futile attempt either way.

They had dinner together in the living room with the Ravenstag and Will took the dogs on a walk, keeping, promising Hannibal not to go far.

When he came home he stumbled into quite the heated discussion between Hannibal and his son. Both ignored him completely, far too concentrated on their argument.

"Yes it does!" Beor just said as Will entered and Hannibal looked as if he was already so over the conversation.

"No it does not," he answered, keeping calm. "It will not sleep in your bed. We can make it comfortable here but that's it."

Beor stubbornly shook his head and Will had to smile. Beor was all his daddy when it came to being stubborn and Hannibal sighed, knowing that this fight wasn't finished in the slightest.

"It can't sleep on the floor!" Beor explained as if Hannibal had difficulty grasping the problem they were discussing.
"And the couch is too small," he continued and Hannibal looked up to Will who could feel the eyeroll in his soul.

"And you said we're gonna sleep in the other room so my bed is free," Beor concluded his argument.

"Darling, how do you think you'll get the stag into your bedroom?" Hannibal asked then and Beor huffed.

"Ask it," he answered as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

"Of course," Hannibal muttered.

“I will not allow it. You know the rule about pets on your bed. This rule also extends towards wild animals.”

“That’s not fair!” Beor started to get agitated and with him the stag who had been sleeping started to stir, huffing as it slowly lifted its head from Beors lap.

“Maybe we can put one of the mattresses out here,” Will suggested, hoping to prevent Beor from starting to cry although it might be too late.

Beor turned to him with a smile and hope in his face.

“The floor really is uncomfortable,” he added. Hannibal with both of them against him sighed and nodded his agreement and Beor was more than triumphant, hugging the Ravenstag.

Hannibal even helped to carry the mattress in the living room while Beor managed to get the Ravenstag on his feet and to step out of the door halfway so they had enough room to put the mattress down. The Ravenstag made itself comfortable and Beor raced into his room to grab his blankets and pillows and brought them back, putting his blanket over the stag and his pillow under its head.

Hannibal didn’t even comment anymore until it got time to go to bed.

Beor tried to argue his way into sleeping with the stag as well but there Hannibal’s patience had run out for the day and the boy quickly stopped pestering his daddy as he noticed him getting impatient with him.

They slept together once again, the dogs all around the bed, Beor cuddled in between Will and Hannibal but they kept the door open slightly in case there was anything happening.

Beor woke them up at an ungodly hour because he squirmed his way out between them and raced in the living room. Hannibal and Will groaned and got up, finding the mattress empty and Beor quite upset about it.

Hannibal had put some more food and water at the door and it had vanished and the only remains of the ravenstag were two of its feathers still on the mattress.

Beor picked them up immediately.

Hannibal started to make breakfast while Beor and Will put the mattress back. There was not even a smidge of dirt on it but Beor was sulking massively and Will tried to cheer him up. The boy didn’t bite and stormed off and Will just figured that the anxiety was getting to him just as much as it was getting to them.

He joined Beor and Hannibal for breakfast and then took the dogs on a walk, getting his thoughts interrupted by his phone ringing. He checked the caller ID and saw that it was Randall so he quickly picked up.

“You will not believe what I caught in your backyard,” Randall told him, not bothering with a greeting.

“I probably won’t,” Will answered him.

“I’ll send you a picture. You should be fine to come back now. I’ll clean up around here and make sure they’ll leave you alone from now on,” Randall said and Will thanked him.

Both he and Randall knew that he didn’t understand shit about it either way and neither bothered to pretend that he did. His phone vibrated seconds later with a couple pictures of – something – Will couldn’t name it even if he would be under the threat of his life. It was dead that much he could tell. Knowing that they packed everything, cleaned and straightened everything up, took what ingredients were perishable to bring back and packed the car. Beor was very excited to return home, especially to their tree and they were relieved as well. Hoping that this nightmare was over now and they could concentrate on having a nice and calm Christmas together.

As they drove off Will was sure that he saw the Ravenstag stand at the edge of the woods, far away from them but when he tried to get a closer look it had already vanished.

Nothing back at home showed what happened, except that the tree was missing. Beor raced outside, the dogs on his heels, to check on his treehouse and to play in ‘his’ woods until Hannibal called him back inside because it was far too cold to stay out too long. He sneaked around the Christmas tree for the rest of the evening.

Will had left to help Randall with some cleanup and to get the full story while also telling their part and when he returned he had expected Hannibal in his study with a glass of wine and Beor long asleep. Instead the only light that was on was in the living room and Will found Beor and Hannibal sleeping on the couch, in their day clothes still, the dogs scattered throughout the room sleeping as well.

He stopped as soon as he spotted them and just smiled. He felt the same exhaustion although it did surprise him that Hannibal hadn’t put Beor to bed earlier. He must have been cranky to the max already when he was this tired.
“Hey wake up,” he said softly, sitting down on the edge of the couch, and putting his hand on Hannibal’s shoulder. He startled awake immediately, clutching Beor to his chest and momentarily confused on where he was.

“You two fell asleep on the couch,” Will told him with a smile as Hannibal blinked, bringing up one hand to rub his eyes.
“Let me put him to bed,” Will said softly and Hannibal nodded. Will lifted Beor up carefully to not wake him and held him tightly against his chest as he went upstairs, not bothering to turn on the lights. He knew he should wake him up to brush teeth but decided against it. They could do it in the morning. Hannibal was usually so behind it that one evening wouldn’t kill them.

He put Beor into bed, pulling his pants off him and tucking him in tightly, ensuring that his miniature Ravenstag was tucked in as well and went into his bedroom where Hannibal had almost made it to bed as well.

Will barely had made himself comfortable as Hannibal cuddled against his side and fell asleep with his head resting on his shoulder. Will felt the same. The relief he had felt all day

had exhausted him more than all the anxiety over the last few days. Or rather he finally realized just how tired he was from worrying so much over the last few days.

The next day Beor oscillated between being a pure ball of excitement about Christmas, riling up every living thing in a 5 mile radius and suddenly being extremely quiet and drawn into himself and just sitting around. Hannibal tried to coax out of him what was the matter after lunch and Beor under tears asked whether the Ravenstag was okay. Hannibal smiled softly.

“I am sure it is,” he assured Beor, who seemed desperate enough to just believe it.

“Will it come back?” He then asked.

“Maybe. If we are in danger again,” Hannibal answered.

“What if it’s hurt again?” Beor then asked and Hannibal pulled him into a hug.

“I am sure it knows to come if it ever needs help again,” he assured his son who seemed reassured enough.

“Can we still feed it?” He finally asked which prompted Will to spend the rest of his day building a deer feeder to put into the woods right behind their house. The owner of the woods would hate seeing the feeder but Will didn’t care a lot. With the dogs around so much it was unlikely actual deer would come this close to their house and the Ravenstag hopefully wouldn’t start eating tree bark.

The next day his excitement for Christmas broke through fully. They had rested a bit, had stopped worrying as much and Beor infected the whole house with his obvious joy. Will couldn’t help but smile at the Christmas songs blaring, Beor happily singing along to those he knew and him riling up everyone. Even Hannibal seemed to have a swing in his step, humming along to the music as he was pulling all registers to make all the Christmas foods.

And cookies of course. Beor was fire and flame to help bake cookies. The kitchen looked like a bomb had exploded in there after the last batch was in the oven and Beor was so wired on all the sugar he ate that he couldn’t even sit still anymore and Will got a good reminder why exactly Hannibal wasn’t a fan of him eating a lot of sugar on normal days.
As it was still some light out, they sent Beor out to play with the dogs to get him tired out and Will helped Hannibal finish the cookies and then clean the kitchen. He had a lot of fun doing it, reliving some of his own childhood doing this and all the other stuff Hannibal insisted on doing for Christmas. The presents, the decorating, the food. The Christmas sweaters and hats and antlers for the dogs and the picture where everybody but him and Will were bribed to sit still enough for a picture. It was beautiful and so damn excessive and over the top.

And maybe it wasn’t just for Beor but for them as well. Hannibal seemed damn near close to a breakdown whenever something went even slightly wrong coming up the last days to Christmas. Beor, not used to this excessiveness in his normal day to day life, proved to not be very appreciative of this total disruption of his routine and more than once was the reason for not everything going smoothly. Hannibal usually receded then, dialed it down for the day and kept up more of their usual routine.

Christmas Eve was spent on the couch, all three of them so full that they didn't want to move even one muscle and watching a Christmas movie. Hannibal and Will sat close together, Will having his arm around Hannibal who happily slouched on the couch and leaned his head against Will's shoulder, and Beor comfortable on Hannibal's lap, hugging his ravenstag stuffie tightly while they were watching and falling asleep long before the movie ended.

Hannibal and Will still finished it, because it was cute, because they were just too lazy to get up and go to bed. Eventually they had to. They put Beor to bed and fell into their own after changing into their pjs.

Beor was merciful enough to let them sleep until nearly seven in the morning, tapping into their bedroom and climbing onto the bed, waking both of them up, his eyes bright with excitement.

They quickly got up, Hannibal pulled out matching Christmas pajamas for them which they quickly changed into and Hannibal picked Beor up then so he wouldn't run ahead and ruin the surprise.

The tree was just beautiful. It was alight in every color, everything was placed perfectly. They took the little railing they had had around the presents and the tree so the dogs couldn't get to them away and all three sat down in front of the tree and started to open presents. Will was surprised that Beor didn't immediately rip into the silver present. Instead he started with others. Will fed the dogs treats that were in the countless boxes for them. Beor got everything he wished for, toys, books, pencils to draw like his daddy. Other books, things both Will and Hannibal had seen and decided that he would like. Stuffed animals, games to play for them. Everything Beor could wish for. He was a spoiled child after all and nobody, not even Hannibal would say otherwise.

Will was delighted with every present he got. Things for every hobby he had or thought about having, things he needed and would be forever too stingy to buy himself and things that were just there to make him happy. Books he would never buy but had looked at for more than three seconds in Hannibal's presence. He was sure he had almost as many presents as Beor did. He also immediately knew which present was from Beor. Presents he should rather say. There were three stacked on top of each other, bound by the same string. Empty picture frames, a digital camera and a polaroid camera. Beor had waited for him to open it and happily explained his thought process.

"Because there aren't any pictures of you," he said. And Will had to fight back tears. He hugged Beor tightly and thanked him. Hannibal smiled as well.

Hannibal got presents as well. Will had picked up things whenever he had seen something. Books Hannibal had mentioned but didn't have in his libraries, he snuck into his office to find out the brands of his drawing paper, his ink. He googled a lot of embarrassingly basic things about fountain pens. He hunted down a set of ceramic ware that was the same as Hannibals because the man still was unhappy about the pieces broken over the years, even if many had been put back together, showing their breakage in gold now.

The amounts of wrapping paper scattered all around them were just unbelievable. The dogs rustled around in it trying to find more treats. Will guarded them carefully so they wouldn't

eat all of them at once.
Hannibal pulled Will into a kiss several times, smiling constantly.

The last present left was the silver one and Will admired Beor's constraint. There wasn't much of it showing anymore when he ripped off the wrapping paper and ripped off the lid of the box.

His eyes were fixated on what was in there, he pulled more paper out and found the collar laying in there. Bright green, a different color from all the other dog's who were all color coded with their collars and their bowls and he turned around to Will with a triumphant look on his face and didn't even allow the man to say anything before he downright tackled him. Will laughed and held Beor tightly.

"I know you wanted it to be a puppy," he explained. "But I would like to go to the shelter and find one of those dogs a forever home instead here with us."

Beor just nodded. He was happy about either thing. Will figured it could turn out to be a puppy either way. He knew how many were put into shelters after Christmas, being bad presents. But his pack had been decimated from the seven he had when he had met Hannibal and he yearned to make the pack bigger again.

The rest of the day was slow. Beor was busy playing with everything and helped clean up as well, Will and Hannibal putting their presents away and Hannibal cooking a feast once again, only eating a quick meal for lunch because dinner would be incredible. And it would be them, their family together and happy. Will and Beor took the dogs on an extended walk after lunch where Will told Beor about his plan for a new dog. How it was with shelter dogs, that Beor would get the chance to help pick one out that would be good for their family.

Beor was more than happy asking questions and learning of their plan. He was so excited about a new dog but Will reminded him that it would take some time to find one.

Dinner was perfect, once again so much to eat, far too much really, Will figured they would still eat leftovers on New Years Eve and another Christmas movie spent cuddled together in front of the TV. Beor held out a lot longer this time, watching the movie to the end and still not ready to go to bed afterwards. To his demise Will and Hannibal were and he managed to find his way into their bed because both of them were ready to do almost everything if it just meant that he would lay down and be quiet.

Their next morning started even slower than the day before. When Hannibal and Will woke up they were alone, although the Ravenstag stuffie was left in their bed. They didn't hear the dogs bark so they just dozed for a while longer before getting up, pulling on some clothes and Will carried the Ravenstag stuffie back into Beors bed.

The boy was playing in the living room happily occupied with his new toys and they tried to return to some normalcy. They really did eat leftovers, kept everything normal and took the dogs on a long walk in the afternoon for some fresh air.

Their evening was spent playing together and a more reasonable bedtime for Beor who insisted on several stories before he succumbed to much needed sleep. Will and Hannibal

stayed up a while longer, cuddling on the couch, Hannibal drinking a glass of wine while Will had poured himself some whisky.

Hannibal sighed when he joined Will in bed after their showers a while later.

“As much as I like Christmas, I am equally excited to get back to normal,” he muttered against Will’s neck. Will chuckled. They did go back to normal. Their normal rhythm even though they didn’t go to work, their normal diet as well.
New Year’s Eve arrived and they packed some things to spend a day or two away from home. To keep the dogs safe they decided to drive out to Wolf Trap to avoid as much of the fireworks as possible. The house was alright for a couple of days. It was slightly cold so Will started a fire in the fireplace while Hannibal put everything he brought away in the kitchen and Will and Beor unpacked their stuff.

Their New Year’s Eve was done without fireworks. Instead it involved creaky lawn chairs and a fire outside, being huddled in blankets and drinking hot chocolate and watching the night sky while a year ended and another began. The dogs were rooting around in the snow but eventually all fell asleep on a picnic blanket that had been put out for them so they wouldn’t need to lay in the snow. With the minutes of the new day ticking down to the first hour Hannibal sighed and pulled Beor closely to him. He was still awake but only barely.

“I never was a fan of fireworks,” Hannibal said quietly looking up in the sky. It was a beautiful clear and quite cold night but by the fire and with the blanket it was okay for now. As the fire started to burn down they packed it up. Will threw some snow into the rest of the fire and made sure it was fully out and grabbed the chairs. Hannibal carried Beor inside, nudging open the door with his foot to allow the dogs inside before him and carried Beor upstairs but did wake him up to brush teeth and tucked him into bed. Beor was asleep within minutes and Hannibal and Will shared a nightcap before going to bed.

They stayed another day out there just spending time together, taking long walks, long enough for Beor to get carried home by Hannibal and playing board games together in the evening, listening to the radio in the background.
Will started his shelter search after they returned home again. He was well known at the shelters in the city, often volunteering and donating money and he looked for a good fit to preselect the dogs before he would bring Beor. Hannibal had told him that he fully trusted both of them to find a dog suitable for them and he would leave this as a bonding experience between them two.

Eventually he had found a dog he felt would be a good fit for them and took half a day off a couple days later and picked Beor up after school to check out their potential new dog. It was love on first sight for Beor and the dog. It didn’t even take five minutes - and some treats - until the dog was already doing tricks for Beor and Will was glad. They ended up taking her home right away, Beor playing with the dog while Will filled out the paperwork and kept an eye on their playing. Will had kept the collar in the car already and Beor was so happy. At home Will took the lead to introduce the pack to their new member and didn’t leave them and Beor alone for the rest of the night. While his pack was open to new member he didn’t want to risk anything especially with the overexcited boy in between them.

Hannibal had been warned beforehand and showed the appropriate excitement over his son barely allowing him inside the door before he was bombarded with the new dog and Beor telling him all about her. He smiled and went into the living room to get to know their newest member of the pack and she took to Hannibal as well. Beor leaned against his daddy's knee and watched him pet the new dog.

"What's her name?" Hannibal asked him with a smile.

"Peanut," Beor immediately answered and Hannibal smiled at him and complimented him on the name. Will and Beor took the dogs on a walk in the evening, keeping Peanut on a leash for now.

The coming weeks were calm. Peanut got integrated into their family with some stumbling blocks but nothing Will hadn't experienced before and could deal with. And the rest of their life was beautifully and normally boring. Will enjoyed it like that. He didn't want things to happen, he just wanted to lead a quiet and happy life with his family.

The Ravenstag didn't appear for weeks after their last meeting. Will looked for it at every walk, Beor asked for it regularly. He still seemed worried about it.

Until one afternoon he came back from the woods, the dogs on his heels and holding a black feather. Storming into his father's study with the feather and with big eyes telling him and Will about the Ravenstag.

"It was even bigger than last time! And it came to get pets!" Beor told them breathlessly while Will looked at the feather with a smile. Hannibal pulled the boy on his lap and they listened to the full story.

Even in the evening before he fell asleep there was only one thing on his mind.

"It was okay daddy," he told Hannibal for the hundredth time since he came back from the woods and Hannibal smiled again.

"I am so glad," Hannibal told him. He really was. Because it hadn't just been Beor who was worried and the relief was feelable in the whole house.

"Do you think it'll come back to stay with us?" Beor then asked and Hannibal in secret hoped not. He didn't mind the Ravenstag and was glad that it helped them but he didn't consider it pet-material and he had no interest to explain to anyone how it came that a black stag with feathers walked in and out of their house. and they had more than enough pets already.

"Wild animals aren't suitable to be pets," he explained to Beor. "It would be terribly unhappy here in the house and the backyard. I am sure it will continue to visit you from time to time."

Beor agreed finally and Hannibal tucked him in and left the room, finding Will in the living room, looking at the new feather. They kept them all together on a shelf and they were beautiful. Even for Will they became a fond reminder of their ally instead of his stomach knotting in fear when he saw the first one Beor had brought.

They regularly got glimpses of the stag when they were in the woods but it rarely came close to them. Often it walked in parallel to them in the woods, fifty feet to the side and vanished again after a while. Beor didn't try to get to it then and Will figured that it probably was still visiting the boy from time to time.

End Notes

This was supposed to be just a little idea I had. some domestic Hannigram with their son but it turned out to be something bigger.

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